

In the specification:

On page 6, in line 27, after "plasma chamber", insert -- that -- .

On page 8:

in line 21, after "etching techniques", insert -- a --;

also in line 21, after "masking layer", cancel "34";

in line 23, after "node 22.", cancel "Masking layer 34" and insert -- The masking layer -- ; and

in lines 25 and 26, cancel "Conductive layer 36 surrounds dummy layer 34.".

In the claims:

Amend claim 1 as follows:

---

1 (amended). A method of forming a dielectric layer on a silicon-containing structure, said method comprising the steps of:

providing, to a silicon-containing structure, a [nitrogen-containing] gas comprising a mixture of nitrogen and oxygen;

heating said silicon-containing structure to an elevated temperature [which is] greater than 700C; and

striking a plasma above said silicon-containing structure [wherein combination of said nitrogen-containing gas, said elevated temperature, and said plasma resulting in] to cause thermal nitridation and thermal oxidation of a portion of said silicon-containing structure.

---

Amend claim 4 as follows:

---

4 (twice amended). The method of claim 1, wherein said silicon-containing structure is a silicon substrate and [said nitrided portion of said silicon-containing structure is] a gate dielectric is formed from the thermal nitridation and thermal oxidation of said silicon-containing structure.